

# III John

## **1. Introduction. V. 1**

V. 1

1. The writer is the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21) with the human instrument believed to be John the apostle.
2. John wrote 5 books: John, I, II, III John, and Revelation.
3. "The elder" = a title of a pastor; advanced in life; probably in context refers to age since John the apostle was elderly in age and the last surviving apostle, thus he would not need an elaborate introduction; may also apply to him as pastor of the church (Ephesus) from where he wrote this epistle.
4. The date of this epistle is believed to be about 90 A.D.
5. This epistle deals with life in a church while II John addressed personal concerns. John addresses this epistle not to the church as such, but to a faithful man in the church, where problems existed, for the comfort and encouragement of those who were standing fast.
6. "Gaius" = there are three other men by the name "Gaius" in the Scriptures (Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom. 16:23), none of which is this same man due to this letter being written some 40 years after the others were mentioned and also because this Gaius was John's convert (verse 4, "my children," referring to the faith); the other three were all associated with Paul.
7. "Wellbeloved" = beloved; esteemed; dear; this word reveals that Gaius was a personal friend of John.
8. "Love" = to love dearly; refers to the God kind of love which is shed abroad in the heart of every believer (Rom. 5:5), is part of the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit in every believer (Gal. 5:22-23), and is evidence one is saved. (I John 3:14)
9. "In the truth" = "in truth" = the article "the" is not present in the Greek.
10. "Truth" = truly; certainly; sincerely.
11. This letter deals with three men.

## **2. Gaius--A Prosperous Christian. V. 2-8**

V. 2

1. "Beloved" = same word as "wellbeloved" in verse 1; esteemed; dear; loved by God; an expression of strong affection used by the apostles when addressing the brethren.
2. "Wish" = to pray; word expresses a strong and earnest desire for something; this, no doubt, was John's prayer for Gaius.
3. "Above all things" = in every respect; concerning all things; John did not value health and outward prosperity more than he did spiritual things.
4. "Prosper" = be successful; applied to any plan or purpose entertained, including success in business, happiness in domestic relations, and prosperity in any of the engagements and transactions in which a Christian might lawfully engage.
5. "Be in health" = to enjoy bodily health; some believe Gaius may have been suffering due to sickness in his body; this may or may not be the case but either way it was John's prayer that he would be as healthy in his body as he was in his soul.
6. "As thy soul prospereth" = refers to Gaius living a life that became a Christian, advancing in the knowledge of the truth, and was an example in the duties of the Christian life; verse 3 brings this out.

### V. 3

1. "Rejoiced" = be glad; to rejoice exceedingly; related to the Hebrew word which represents a young sheep or lamb skipping and frisking over the hills for joy; reference to John's emotional reaction to the good things he heard about Gaius.
2. "Greatly" = exceedingly beyond measure; John gives double emphasis of his rejoicing exceedingly.
3. "Brethren" = from the same womb; refers to Christians all of whom are from the womb of God in Holy Ghost conviction; traveling Christians who had passed through Gaius' hometown and brought word to John's location.
4. "Came" = to come from one place to another, and used both of persons arriving and of those returning; the Greek construction denotes repetition, from time to time; this was not a one time report.
5. "Testified" = to bear witness; to affirm what one has seen, heard, or experienced; to give a first hand detailed account.
6. "The truth that is in thee" = refers to Gaius adhering steadfastly to the truth (the whole body of revealed truth) in every sphere of life--moral, intellectual, and spiritual; this is in spite of the fact that error abounded and that there were many false teachers in the world.
7. "Walkest" = to regulate one's life; to conduct one's self; the tense reveals an habitual continuous lifestyle.
8. "In the truth" = according to truth; refers to that which is true in things pertaining to God and the duties of man in moral and religious truth.

### V. 4

1. "Joy" = gladness.
2. "My children" = offspring; indicates that Gaius was John's convert; means John was the human instrument that the Lord used to preach the gospel to Gaius which the Holy Ghost used to convict, convince, and convert him.
3. The same thing may be said by all preachers of the gospel concerning those converted under their ministry whether they are still under their care or removed to some other pasture.
4. This verse could be applied to all Christian parents concerning their own physical children whether at home or away from home. There is nothing that would give more peace to a Christian parent on his dying pillow than to be able to leave this world with the assurance that his children are walking in truth and would continue to do so.

### V. 5

1. "Beloved" = esteemed; dear; loved by God; an expression of strong affection used by the apostles when addressing the brethren.
2. In verse 4, John spoke in general of Gaius' walk in truth. Now he speaks more specifically of his acts of generous hospitality and says that he had faithfully, in that respect, done his duty as a Christian.
3. First "doest" = to accomplish; means he actually carried out the task; the tense shows that hospitality was a habit with him (continuous action).
4. "Faithfully" = trustful; means Gaius could be relied on to discharge his duty.
5. Second "doest" = to work; labor; perform; this word carries the idea of wearying labor; the Greek construction sums up Gaius' whole history of service--his hospitality to Christian brethren and even to strangers in need.
6. "Brethren" = from the same womb; refers to the saved who are from the womb of

God in Holy Ghost conviction.

7. "Strangers" = one not at home; this may refer to Christians from churches in other areas of whom Gaius did not know, while brethren refers to those whom Gaius did know and from his area; this also could refer to those who were not saved but in need of a place to stay as they traveled.

#### V. 6

1. "Which" = who; refers to the brethren referred to in verse 3.

2. "Borne witness" = same word as testified in verse 3; to affirm what one has seen, heard, or experienced; to give a first hand detailed account.

3. "Charity" = agape; God kind of love in action; more than emotion or words.

4. "Before" = in the presence of.

5. "Church" = a local, visible body of baptized believers who meet together to glorify the Lord.

6. "Whom" = refers to those Gaius has shown hospitality to.

7. "Bring forward" = to fit one out with the necessary requirements for one's journey at hand; this includes receiving a person, entertaining him for the night, and providing the supplies needed for the next stage of the journey.

8. "After a godly sort" = "in a manner worthy of God"; in a manner appropriate for one who represents the Lord; refers to doing such in a manner that becomes those who serve God or as becomes those who profess to be saved (Phil 1:27): to do to others is the same as doing it to the Lord (Mat. 25:35-40); since they are God's representatives, treat them as you would God.

9. "Thou shalt do well" = you will do (future tense) that which is required of you in these circumstances. (Rom. 12:13; I Peter 4:8-9)

#### V. 7

1. "Because" = gives the reason he would do well (verse 6), by receiving these into his home (verse 8).

2. "For" = on behalf of.

3. "His name's sake" = "the name" = in the Greek; refers to Christ; the idea is, that they had undertaken this journey not on their own account, but for the cause of Christ; called and sent by Him.

4. "Went forth" = refers to the journey they had undertaken as missionaries, proclaiming the glorious gospel of Christ.

5. "Taking nothing of the Gentiles" = they went forth determining not to be supported by the heathen (Gentiles; those who are not Jews) so that they would not be misunderstood and mistaken by those they preached the gospel to, to be out for the money (support) they could get; Paul defended the right of preachers to receive support (I Cor. 9:7-15) from those he preaches to but he refused to accept it from Corinth because it would be misunderstood.

#### V. 8

1. "Therefore" = in view of the fact that these brethren were called and sent by God. (verse 7)

2. "We" = Christians.

3. "Ought" = to be in debt for; implies that we have an obligation to do so.

4. "To receive" = means to show hospitality to.

5. "Such" = of this kind or sort; refers to preachers and missionaries who are traveling

for the cause of Christ (His name).

6. "That" = gives the reason we should receive them.

7. "Fellowhelpers" = a companion in work; labor together with.

8. "To the truth" = the whole body of revealed truth; applies to the Lord Jesus. (John 14:6; I Cor. 3:4-9)

9. All Christians cannot go forth to preach the gospel, but all may contribute something to the support of those who do. And if that be the case they would have a joint participation in the work of spreading the truth.

### **3. Diotrephes--a Proud Christian. V. 9-10**

V. 9

1. "I wrote unto the church" = this statement implies that John had written on a previous occasion, to this local church of which Gaius and Diotrephes were members; that letter seems to have been sent by a group of brethren whom John recommended as being worthy of hospitality and support so that they might continue on with the spread of the gospel message; that letter seems to have fell into the hands of Diotrephes who rejected the brethren and John's commendation; the brethren then had turned to Gaius, who met his responsibility towards them and they returned with a good report concerning Gaius but not so toward Diotrephes; this is why this second letter (III John) is written to Gaius; II John is not the first letter referred to in this letter.

2. "Diotrephes" = name meant "nourished by Zeus" which was an idol god; we refer to him as a Christian because he was a member of this church, thus giving him benefit of the doubt as Paul had always done to those who professed to be saved; yet his actions and characteristics seemed to indicate he was a lost church member; we know this is true if he continued acting this way without confession of his sin for I John 3:9 states plainly that one cannot practice sin naturally and be saved.

3. "Loveth to have the preeminence" = one word in the Greek; means to desire to be first; indicates he desired to be at the head of all things, to rule, to lord over others, and to enjoy first place; in contrast Col. 1:18 declares that only Christ rightly holds first place; John 3:30 states how John the Baptist felt.

4. "Receiveth" = to show hospitality to; negated by "not."

V. 10

1. "Wherefore" = in view of the situation with Diotrephes.

2. "I come" = John intended to make a visit and deal with the situation.

3. "If" = indicates that the timing is all that is uncertain.

4. "Deeds" = actions.

5. "Remember" = to bring to mind; John intended to deal with the problem at hand; he was an apostle with authority to recommend to the church what disciplinary action should be taken against Diotrephes; Paul as an apostle made a similar strong statement to the church at Corinth concerning one of their members committing open sin. (I Cor. 5:1-5)

6. "Doeth" = to accomplish; the tense reveals continuous action.

7. "Prating against" = one word in the Greek; talking nonsense; to bring forward idle accusations; make empty charges; to accuse one falsely with malicious words.

8. "Us" = refers to John.

9. "Words" = refers to speech.

10. "Malicious" = evil; of a bad nature.

11. "Not content therewith" = not satisfied with words only, but begins to act.

12. "Receive" = to receive hospitably.
13. "Forbiddeth" = to hinder; to prevent; tense reveals a repetition in several instances.
14. "Them that would" = those in the church that desired and were willing to receive the brethren; Diotrephes prevented them from doing so.
15. "Casteth out" = to send out; to compel one to depart using stern language; this refers to the brethren who had come with the letter from John; they were driven away instead of being received, mainly due to Diotrephes and his influence; this might also apply to some of the church members being dismissed (due to Diotrephes' influence) from the church because they were willing to receive the brethren.
16. "Church" = assembly.
17. Diotrephes is the kind of church member that destroys churches. They are eager for power and authority. They trample on truth, ignore the Bible, grieve the Spirit, and scatter the flock.
18. May we be more like Gaius instead of Diotrephes.

#### **4. Demetrius--a Pleasant Christian. V. 11-12**

##### **V. 11**

1. "Beloved" = esteemed; dear; loved by God; an expression of strong affection used by the apostles when addressing the brethren; John directs this to Gaius and exhorts him not to follow Diotrephes's example.
2. "Follow" = to imitate; negated by "not" thus meaning, "do not have the habit of imitating."
3. "Evil" = of a bad nature; wicked; refers to the things of the devil.
4. "But" = contrast; evil contrasted to good; probably contrasting Diotrephes with Demetrius.
5. "Good" = upright; of a good constitution or nature; refers to the things of God; describes that which is morally and spiritually good.
6. "Doeth good" = one word in the Greek; to do well; do right; do something which profits others and in so doing, it is as unto the Lord (Mat. 25:40); the tense is continuous.
7. "Of God" = refers to that person who "doeth good" as being saved and in contact with God because He is the only source of genuine good. (I John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,18)
8. "Doeth evil" = one word in the Greek; to do harm or wrong; the tense reveals a continuous habitual lifestyle.
9. "Hath not seen God" = does not know God; has never come to know God; is not saved (I John 3:6); John does not say what Jesus said in John 8:44 but he means the same thing; John implies that Diotrephes did not show evidence of being a saved man.

##### **V. 12**

1. Demetrius" = little is known about him; it is possible that he may have been a member of the same church as Gaius and had united with him in showing Christian hospitality to those whom Diotrephes refused; also it is possible that he was connected with the church at Ephesus from where John wrote this letter to Gaius which contained John's commendation of him to Gaius.
2. "Hath a good report" = witness has been borne; the tense is perfect, revealing that he had a good reputation that went back into the past and remained unto the present; this good report was two-fold.
  - A. "Of all *men*" = refers to the general witness of those who knew Demetrius.
  - B. "Of the truth itself" = this could refer to "the Word" as "the Truth" which would

mean that his life matched the truth of the gospel so well that the resemblance was obvious; this could also refer to the Holy Spirit bearing witness (speaking unto John) because the Holy Spirit is "the Truth." (I John 5:6)

3. "Bear record" = bear witness; the tense is continuous; this means John knew Demetrius' life and could give a first hand detailed account of his exemplary character still being maintained at the present time.

4. "Know" = to have absolute positive knowledge of the facts; Gaius no doubt knew from past experience that John's recommendations were reliable and truthful (true); John always spoke of himself as having such a character for truth that no one who knew him would call it in question (John 19:35; 21:24); John is not bragging but wrote this because it was "God breathed" (inspired). (II Tim. 3:16)

### **5. Conclusion. V. 13-14.**

#### **V. 13**

1. "I had many things to write" = the Greek construction refers to the time when he was writing the letter and had many matters (things) which could have been included, but when he had completed the letter, there were several topics which he deliberately chose to omit, reserving them for a later date when he could say them more effectively in person.

2. "Ink" = made of soot and water, with a mixture of some species of gum to give it consistency and durability.

3. "Pen" = made from a sharpened reed.

4. The mention of "ink and pen" may indicate that John wrote this letter with his own hand instead of using a secretary as was common in that day. This may be the reason for the brevity of this letter.

#### **V. 14**

1. "Trust" = to hope; implies that John was expecting to visit Gaius; the use of this word does not imply "wavering" but merely acknowledges the fact that God is the One who controls our plans. (James 4:13-15)

2. "Shortly" = immediately; very soon.

3. "See" = to visit; to have an interview with.

4. "Speak" = to talk.

5. "Face to face" = really mouth to mouth; the phrase is a common one and denotes conversation with another person.

6. "Peace" = harmony; a traditional Jewish blessing that had been adopted by the early Christians; peace was the blessing needed by the church in Gaius' city, thus John selected a proper word for the situation present in this church; they had division and needed peace (harmony).

7. "Our friends" = your friends and mine (John's) in Ephesus.

8. "Salute" = greet; wish well to.

9. "Greet" = to enfold in the arms; embrace; to draw to one's self; to receive joyfully.

10. "The friends" = refers to John's friends in Gaius' area, of whom he says greet them by name.

10. "By name" = a phrase used to describe the good shepherd calling his sheep by name. (John 10:3)

11. John had a shepherd's heart, caring enough to pen this letter to one believer who faced a difficult situation.

12. Churches today need more men like Gaius and Demetrius, men who love the Bible,

the brethren, and the souls of men. We can do without Diotrephes.

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